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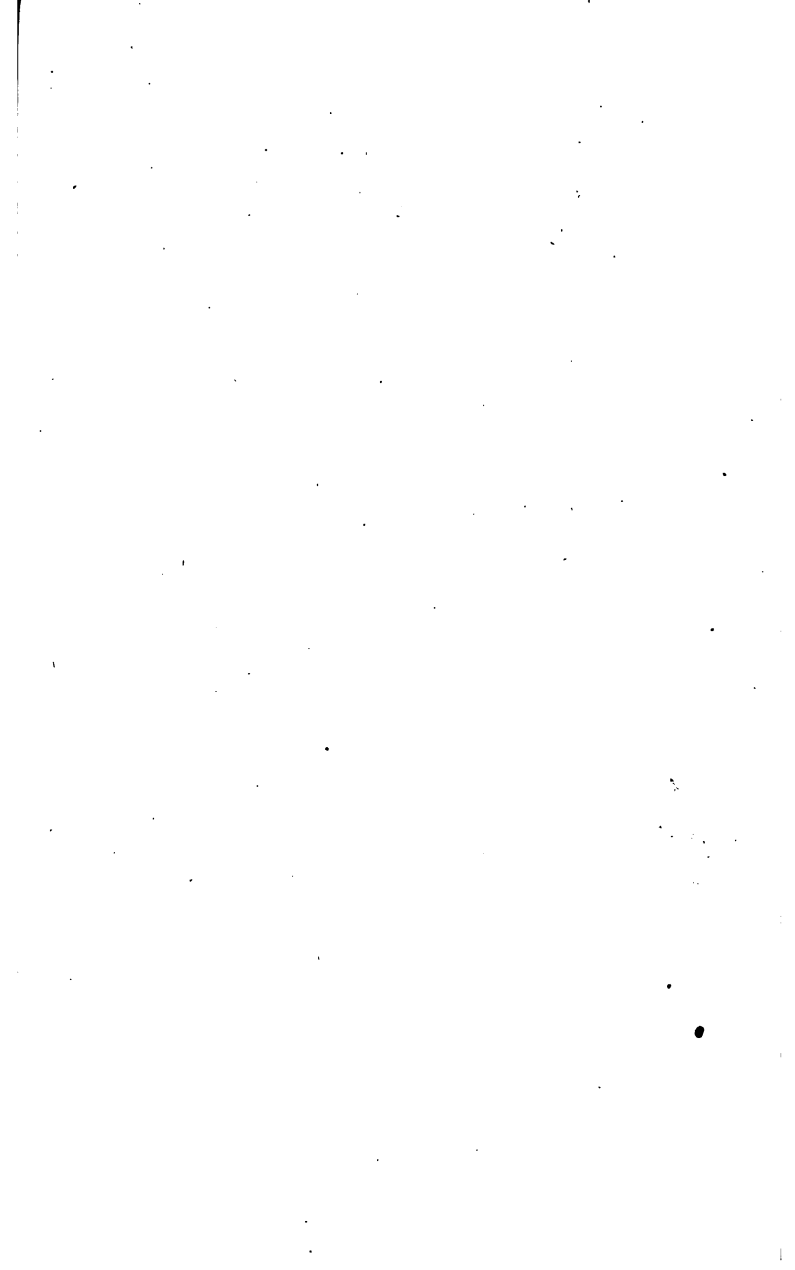
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*Emily Anderson  
of  
Grand Bluff.*

POEMS. *Aug. 1867*

BY

CLAUDE LAKE.

LONDON:

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1867.

**LOAN STACK**

**UNWIN BROTHERS, PRINTERS, BUCKLESBURY, E.C.**

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1867

TO

JOSEPH MAZZINI,

THE PROPHET, MARTYR, AND HERO,

*These Poems are Dedicated,*

IN UNDYING GRATITUDE AND REVERENCE.







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## POEMS TO J. M

### I.

#### THE TORRENT.

OH torrent, roaring in thy giant fall,  
And thund'ring grandly o'er th' opposing blocks,  
Thy voice, far louder than the lion's call,  
Through trackless forests shakes the heart of rocks,  
Runs through the marrow of the earth with shocks,  
Lashes the clouds with terror, for they fly  
Along the high wide blue with streaming locks,  
And round thee foam white dazzling flashes high,  
And with forked water-flames half licks the central  
sky.

Oh, what a storm of waters ! Oh, what chasms  
Of foam ! what seething hills ! what whirling rain !  
Billows on billows press, though torn by spasms ;  
Wounded and bleeding, yet defying pain !  
They grapple with the stones, that gnash in vain  
Their cruel teeth, for smarting wounds they brave,  
And toss in scorn their wildly flowing mane,  
When with exulting cries big wave on wave  
Rolls with a mighty sweep o'er a slain foeman's grave.

Roll on, great torrent, with triumphal song,  
Through caverned cliff, through rock and mountain  
roll ;  
Force all the barriers that around thee throng,  
Thou know'st th' eternal ocean for thy goal.  
Hence thine impetuous rush, and roar, and roll ;  
Hence thy wild heavings as thou flow'st amain ;  
Hence thy far-reaching and tempestuous call  
For stream and river, brook and rill and rain,  
Thou on thy Titan breast would'st carry to the main.

Roll on! The heavens are with thee, for they fling  
Their lovely rainbows round thy gleaming brow;  
Rainbows, that like the crowns of heroes cling  
For ever round thee with their magic glow;  
Or like the wondrous halo which will flow  
Around the martyr's head; for those sweet hues,  
They hover round thee in thy weal and woe,  
Like love, that with its tender tears bedews  
And heals the bitter pain of ev'ry earthly bruise!

Roll on! with a white heat upon thy way!  
Lo yon, a little tiny woodland bird  
Flits on wet wing through all the surf and spray,  
And settles on a jagged rock unscared,  
Round whose grim base a billowy din is heard;  
A bright amazed ray from its black eyes  
It darts around, and listens not afeared—  
Then diamond-powdered to the woods it flies,  
And sings to forest ears the mighty melodies.

E'en thus *thou* art ! for that Titanic stream

But a material symbol was of thee !

A dim reflection of thy being did seem

Thou man, high-souled as son of man can be !

Into whose mind, vast, noble, pure, and free,

Flash awful revelations light-like in :

Unveiling spiritual laws to thee ;

Great central truths, that glow all life within,

That move the nations on, and make the planets  
spin.

Thou hero ! for through prejudice's walls,

That lock up earth against the quick'ning floods,

And 'gainst the fresh regenerating falls

Of young ideas, that in sprouting mood

Seethe like new wine, stirred by the grape's hot blood,

In the old bottles ; thou, oh, brave and bold !

Didst force thy way, crushing night's deathly brood,

As George the sainted, in the days of old—

The dragon, who beneath his footstep writhing roll'd.

Dragons, alas ! still darken the green earth,  
War with the good, the beautiful, the wise ;  
From gulfs of ancient night they've issued forth,  
And with their shadowy wings blot out the skies ;  
Old creeds that gasp forth curses, tyrannies  
All foul with feeding on their own decay,  
Old cramping forms, and crippling social lies,  
Whose venomous breathings with corruption slay,  
Like loathsome rattlesnakes that glut upon their  
prey.

But thou assail'st them, fearless, though they spurt  
Their reeking poison in thy smarting face ;  
And careless of thy bruises and thy hurt,  
Thou still press'st on with an undaunted pace ;  
A bold path-finder for the coming race,  
And in thy faith, strong as the morning star,  
Piercing the welt'ring clouds with lucent rays ;  
Thy voice, a light above time's din and war,  
Proclaimeth to mankind the rosy dawn afar !



Thou martyr ! for the world it knows thee not,  
    Scoffs at thee, scorns thee, rails and laughs and  
        sneers ;  
With barbèd darts embitters thy hard lot,  
    As oft of old to prophets and to seers ;  
With its bleared sight the veil it cannot pierce,  
    And see the future rise upon the days !  
Thus persecutes with hatred blind and fierce,  
    And, 'stead of crowns plucked from the living bays,  
    It binds thy brows with thorns—thorns that will  
        turn to rays !  
Still from thy heart's vast deeps the shouts arise,  
    And swell along, a rushing lava stream—  
A lava stream of burning melodies,  
    Shaking thy brethren from a sluggish dream,  
To strive and *be* the thing they fain would seem ;  
    With thee, false custom's cramping bounds to leap,  
To trust the rising of the virgin beam,  
    And at thy call through death and danger sweep  
    Towards the free, the pure, the renovating deep.

And still around thee, thro' the battle's roar,  
    Shimmers in splendour and unfading bloom,  
Brighter than moonlight on the seething shore,  
    Sweeter than roses clust'ring round the tomb,  
Born of the struggle with the fatal gloom ;  
    A subtle gleam, fleeting 'mid tears and ruth,  
A dewy prophecy of days to come,  
    When *one* great rainbow, love, and light and  
    truth,  
Encircle will the world with an eternal youth !

But I, behold, like to the tiny thing,  
    The forest bird ; I feel a magic spell,  
That draws me strongly on uncertain wing  
    Away from all the violet woodland smell,  
To hear the words that from thy spirit well :  
    Enchained, entranced, oh ! let me list, while flame  
And dazzling light in billows round me swell ;  
    Then flying back to shades from whence I came  
    I will heroic deeds, prophetic words, proclaim.

## II.

## ASPIRATIONS.

## I.

I SAW thee in the streets, so wan and pale ;  
My heart, it shivered at the saddening sight ;  
Like a thin cloud thou wert, that through the sky  
doth sail,  
And threatens to dissolve, each moment, on its  
flight.

But through that thinly textured cloud, the moon  
Can pour her splendour with a radiant sweep ;  
While its strong brethren make her silver light to  
swoon,  
And quench her lustre in their dense and gloomy  
deep.

Thus, through thy wan and weak and worn-out clay,  
The full-orbed soul floods her ethereal light ;  
Purer than pure moonbeams shineth her wondrous  
ray ;  
For, through the racking fire, she winged her up-  
ward flight.

## II.

Each word that falleth from thy lips,  
Is like a seed that lieth long ;  
Then sprouts within my spirit's deeps,  
And buds and blossoms forth in song.

## III.

Weeping, weary, did I wander  
Thro' the world's wide weird wood ;  
Wet my cheeks with drops of sorrow ;  
Wet my soles with drops of blood ;

Tumbling here, and stumbling yonder,  
Bramble-bruised, with thorns all torn,  
For the path I groped despairing,  
For a light I sighed forlorn.

But thou took'st me, strong and tender,  
Oh my master, by the hand ;  
Pity, cheer, reproach, and rousing  
In thy words did sweetly blend.

Tho' the way is wild as ever,  
Still I falter not, nor fear ;  
Led by thee, I'll pierce the forest,  
See the vaulting skies appear.

## IV.

Am I, indeed, th' Æolian harp,  
That to each breeze responsive swells ;  
Within whose slight and quiv'ring strings,  
No deep and inborn music dwells ?

Am I the pool, where flower, and leaf,  
And wand'ring cloud, and fitting beam,  
Are glassed in beauty and in joy,  
Then pass away, a silent dream ?

Oh, wert thou then the constant wind,—  
To wake my echoes, and to play  
The measures of thy own soul out  
Upon my chords, for aye and aye !

Wert thou the flower, the leaf, the cloud,  
The ray of a transcendent sun !  
Casting thy splendour in my deeps,  
And flaming grandly on and on.

## V.

I move amid a golden cloud ;  
The green earth springs beneath my tread ;  
My thoughts like birds with joy are loud ;  
And every throbbing pulse is glad.

This very day, this blessed day,  
Thee face to face shall I behold ;  
Like seas, when storms have ebbed away,  
And hills, when thunders on have rolled,

That lie like babes all hushed and bright,  
And suck in sun and rainbow-skies ;  
Thus will I drink the words of light,  
Falling adown thy lips and eyes.

Oh dewy calm ! Oh peace divine !  
More still than fragrant summer-air ;  
To feel my spirit kneel to thine,  
In hushed and reverential prayer.

## VI.

My soul is like a fragile flower,  
Whose cup the sky so full has filled  
With dew, that earthwards it must lower  
Its head, till half the wealth is spilled.

Thus hast thou showered on me, my Heaven,  
Such glorious bliss without alloy ;  
My heart, it bends 'neath bounty given,  
And overbrims in tears of joy.



## VII.

Like to the echoes, clear and light,  
The sounding horn arouses,  
That flit from height to Alpine height,  
In elfin-like carouses ;  
Then float away,  
With flamings of the forward-speeding day.

Thus, in my soul, thy words awake  
Ideal aspirations,  
That heavenwards their pulsion take :  
Swift dawn-lit exhalations,  
And swell and rise  
To steep their being in the infinite skies.

## VIII.

My heart is hushed and holy,  
And pure and calm my soul,  
Like aisles in old cathedrals,  
Where organ billows roll.  
And o'er my fancy flitteth  
A dim and lovely light,  
Like beams that fall and quiver  
Through oriel windows bright.

Oh thou, thou art the music  
That, like a tide, sweeps in,  
Waking the sacred echoes  
My spirit's deeps within.  
And thou, thou art the splendour,  
Mysteriously divine,  
That overflows with glory  
That twilight soul of mine.

## IX.

Sometimes, in the summer night,  
Floating o'er the silent deep,  
Did my fingers in their flight  
Through the slumbering waters sweep.

Raising then my hand, I spied  
Drops of ocean-fire and light  
From my gleaming fingers slide,  
Like the shooting-stars of night.

Thus I dipped, with gliding thought  
Thro' thy deep, mysterious soul ;  
Now, with light and fire full-fraught,  
O'er me dazzling doth it roll.

## X.

Like Jove's great eagle, who on giant wings  
Bore the Greek Ganymede unto the skies,  
Thus on thy wingèd words, oh let me rise  
Unto the ether of perennial things.

Till my whole soul on her aërial flight  
Staggers, and reels, and pants, divinely drunk,  
And in the infinite of Spirit sunk,  
Swallowed and lost my life in vast whirlpools of light.

## XI.

Blossoms rain upon the lea ;  
Moonbeams on the silent sea ;  
Dewdrops on the linden-tree ;  
And my fancies upon thee.

Milk-white blossoms fade away ;  
Quenched in night the moony ray ;  
Dews are dead at break of day ;  
Fancies droop all wan and gray.

But the lea blooms fair and bright ;  
And the sea rolls on in might ;  
And the lime waves day and night ;  
And thou standest in thy height.

## XII.

Creature of moods and changes manifold :

Mutable as the film of fleeting cloud ;

Transfusèd now with heaven's purest gold,

And now the lightning's dread and gloomy shroud ;

Dissolvèd, with keen bliss, in the blue sky ;

'Mid storms of tears weeping thyself away ;

When, when, immovable, and calm and high,—

Soul, like a star, wilt thou pursue thy way ?

## DELIGHT.

FLEETER than a tone scarce born  
That melts away,  
Sweeter than a dream of morn  
That shuns the day,  
Swifter than a rainbow fading out of sight :  
Sucked away as dewdrops by the burning light ;  
Or like birds or blossoms, takest thou thy flight—  
Sunbeam of delight.

## A SIGH.

SILENT, I sat within the boat,  
The earth and sea were still ;  
The mist wrapped softly, fold on fold,  
O'er wood, and dale, and hill :

Dim shone the moon, and far away  
The sea lay waste and bare ;  
Low-wailing Ossian's ghost did float  
Across the waters drear.

And wailing low, my weary heart,  
Sighed from its inner deep :  
Oh Love, that I could lay me down  
Upon thy breast, and sleep !



Oh Love, thou art the cradle, thou,  
    To rock the heart to rest ;  
Oh Love, thou art the fountain, thou,  
    With waters cool and blest.

Where art thou, Love ? Oh, loud I call !  
    Life's dust and heat they lie  
Upon my wings, and drag them down :  
    Oh, hear me where I sigh !

So sadly did the moon look down,  
    Sadly she seemed to sigh :  
Yea, where is Love ? and where is rest ?  
    Shrill did the sea-mew cry.

## THE WIND.

ACROSS the barren moors the wild, wild wind  
Went sweeping on, and with his sobs and shrieks  
Filled the still night, and tore the woof of clouds  
Through which the moon did shed her cold clear light.  
From age to age a houseless wanderer he—  
Neither of heaven, nor yet of earth, but doomed  
For evermore to waver 'twixt the two :—  
Begging the moon with moans to take him up  
Into her charmed calm ; now with a wail,  
Piteous and low, beseeching that the earth  
Might fold him to her bosom, but in vain !  
A lonely outcast, frenzied does he storm  
Wildly from land to land, from sea to sea,  
Driving the clouds before him, ploughing up  
The shaking sod, splitting the tow'ring masts,  
And laying low the oaks of thousand years.

But I that night ne'er closed an eye in sleep,  
For I did see him wand'ring o'er the moor—  
A giant phantom lost in midnight gloom,  
Flitting a restless shadow 'twixt the earth  
And round orb'd moon; loose tattered folds of clouds,  
Ragged with ages, swept behind, as he  
With Titan strides did bridge the rocky chasms ;  
Oh how he sobbed and shrieked, and howled and roared,  
Torn with eternal hunger after home.  
So roars the lion from Numidian peaks,  
Swaying his manèd head from side to side,  
As low, then loud and louder swell his tones,  
Till big with horror thro' the forest lone  
They roll towards the plain, curdling the blood  
Of flocks and herds returning to the fold.  
So howls the famished wolf across the waste  
Siberian snows, with glare of restless eyes,  
Making a hideous brilliance in the dark.  
Now worn away, the wild wind's voice would die  
Fainting with its excess ; then draw a sigh—

Sounding far off, and then a soughing wail,  
A roar, a shriek, to pierce the ears of night ;  
So on and on, through all the livelong night,  
And all the livelong night I tossed about ;  
His stormy voice, it would not let me rest,  
But woke an echo in me, rolling on  
Over my boundless waste of soul, till all  
The weary longings and the phantoms wild,  
The cravings with their thirst unquenchable,  
The doubts—dark looming in the nether mists,  
Rose up in tumult, shrieking with one voice :  
“ Is there no goal ? shall we for aye and aye  
Be hurried restlessly through endless space ?  
Oh has the storm no nest ? the soul no home ?  
And the foundation stone of all my being  
Shook, and a flood, brackish with tears unshed,  
Surged o'er and o'er me.—Tortured I arose,  
Went to the open casement, and looked out.—  
There was a lull.—Upon the gravelled walks  
And smooth-cut sward, patches of moonlight lay ;

The clouds were swept away ; and sharp and clear  
The trees did cast their shadows on the ground.  
Weird-like and moonlit the wan brood of night  
Did flit adown the ridges of the moors,  
Up from the river, and from out the trees,  
Gliding with noiseless movements in and out  
The pale moonlight, making my flesh to creep ;  
And sick with fear I turned me to my rest—  
But not to sleep, for he on dewèd wings  
Had shyly fled before the moaning wind,  
Who now arose again in all his strength,  
And tore along, blasting the peace of night ;  
And the old clock did toll the weary hours,  
As one by one night dropped them from her lap,  
And weary, wearily I counted them,  
With burning eyes and with a burning brain.  
But, lo !  
What golden touch falls on the curtain now ?  
Up from my bed I spring—I look, I see  
A trembling light gleam faintly in the east,

A trembling light, while all around is dark ;  
It grows, it deepens into liquid gold  
And glowing orange and vermilion bright ;  
It spreads along in billowy ripples, like  
A glittering ocean when the tide rolls in.  
Smiling, it greets the mist-enshrouded earth,  
And draws her up with hill and tree and field,  
Driving the host of pris'ning fogs to flight,  
That brooding vengeance fly behind the hills,  
And gath'ring force from night, swoop in one mass  
Of densest black across the swooning earth.  
Trees weep, and long drawn sighs float here and there ;  
Have shadows then wiped out the golden light ?  
See ! see ! the strangling cloud  
Sinks back ; pierced by the arrow of the dawn,  
Her blood—it trickles on the grass, and all  
The vague wan children of the night, they fly  
In dire confusion westward. . . . Hark ! oh hark !  
The lovely morn now blows his silver horn,  
And like a lavish prodigal he strews

Red roses, thick as sands on amber shores  
Along heaven's eastern floor : for now the sun,  
The radiant conqueror of the night, steps forth  
Upon the gorgeous path, with dazzling shield,  
Greeted by pealing chants as he begins  
His grand triumphal march : hills, vales, and streams,  
Laugh glowing up to him ; the heavy tears  
Wept through the night, now sparkle on the grass  
Like orient pearls, well knowing that the sun  
Will kiss them all away ; the merry birds  
Shake out their plumage wet with drops, and flit  
In airy gambols twitt'ring to and fro ;  
The flowers smile again, and shyly play  
With morning rays.

But in the west, a white mist like a dream  
With languid rooks, floats o'er the winding stream,  
And wearied out, the wind, a phantom, strides  
On with the faded moon and flick'ring star,  
Towards the hazy stretch of western moors ;  
His strong voice dying slowly as he goes.

But by my side a radiant spirit stood,  
A sunbeam, whispering, with a smile, "Behold!  
After the darkness still there falls a light;  
After the storm a tranquil calm there falls.  
There is a light; yea, and there is a rest!"  
And all the weary and the restless gusts  
That had been shaking at my roots of being  
Were lulled, a silence came, and dewy sleep  
Fell on my burning eyes and burning brain.



## ON A LETTER.

## I.

SUNBEAMS can fling no purer brightness o'er the sea  
 And rain-showers bring no surer blessing to the lea,  
 And lilies wing with no more sweetness the gold bee,  
 Than those few lines thy hand has penned have  
 brought to me.

## II.

Soft lies the silent fall of snow  
 Upon the hemlock tree ;  
 Soft lies the moonlight's silver flow  
 Upon the troubled sea.

Sweet on the blossom of the vines  
 The night-dews drop from high ;  
 But softer, sweeter far, thy lines  
 Upon my spirit lie.

## ECHOES OF SPRING.

## I.

I WALK about in driving snow,  
 And drizzling rain, splashed o'er and o'er ;  
 No sign that radiant spring e'en now  
 Stands at the threshold of the door.

No sign that fragrant violets burn  
 To burst the ground and quicken forth ;  
 No sign that swallow flights return,  
 To gladden all the serious north.

But in my breast—what flutterings here !  
 What bursts of song ! what twitt'rings blest !  
 Sure the first swallow of the year  
 Within my heart has built her nest.

## II.

Oft on the gleaming April days,  
When skies are soft, and winds are warm,  
And in the air a subtle charm,  
And on the hill a flight of rays ;

When silver clouds slide through the blue,  
Spreading a pure, transparent wing,  
And all the budding branches ring  
With blithesome birds, that warbling woo ;

Beneath a pear tree's shade I lay,  
Deep bedded in the long thick grass,  
And heard the twitt'ring swallow pass,  
And grasshoppers at endless play.

I knew, though flowers mine eyes did screen,  
That butterflies danced in the light ;  
For, breaking sunbeams in their flight,  
They flashed their shadows on the green.

And gazing up, in dreamful ease,  
Where quiv'ring frail on shivery sprays,  
The blossoms mix a milky maze,  
What hum of golden-girted bees!

So lily-white, the tree, behold,  
Seems set on fire by burnished lights,  
And shoal on honeying shoal alights,  
And turns the snowy boughs to gold.

Thus on my spirit—music-fraught,  
Burst swarms of glimm'ring melodies,  
And like the yellow-banded bees,  
Make honey of my flutt'ring thought.

## III.

Sometimes on my soul will throng  
Such a blossom-burst of song,  
That I cannot seize it all,  
Letting sweetest measures fall.

Thus a child feels—sudden sunk  
On a crowding violet bank,  
And delighted and amazed,  
Gathers in a flushèd haste.

Gathers them so fast and fleet,  
Little fingers cannot meet  
O'er the lot ; and swifter still  
Than they cull, the wealth they spill.

To that sweets o'erflooded nook,  
Casting back one longing look,  
At the last it takes away  
But one little odorous spray.

Yet through many a day and night,  
Flinging back the fragrant sight,  
Cleaves to face, and hands, and feet,  
All the woodland's violets sweet.

## IV.

Fain would I sing of each sweet sight and sound,  
Of fleeting odours wheeling round and round,  
Of sunbeams dancing on the virgin grass,  
Of flocks of fleecy clouds that glimmer as they pass.

Of larks, that lost in the blue ether float,  
Of the weird blackbird's dream—enchanted note !  
While the glad hedges palpitate with song,  
That drops like murm'ring rain the dewy fields among.

Of blooming bushes and of budding trees,  
Of flaming flowers, dotting the grassy leas,  
Of glowing pools and of the babbling rills,  
That flash through azure mists, slumb'ring on folded  
    hills.

Fain would I sing, sweet April-time, of thee,  
And mingle in thy wantonness of glee ;  
But thou such overwealth of sweets dost fling,  
My heart is all too full, too full to speak or sing.

## V.

There's somewhat in the loveliness of spring,  
In the young light, and in the fragrant bloom,  
In the sweet song that each soft breeze doth wing,  
In the bright flowers that rise from earth's dark  
womb ;

Which fills with sadness the presentient mind,  
And for a far-off home awakes the sigh ;  
Which makes us gaze, with longings undefined,  
On dim blue hills, and weep—we know not why.

## VI.

Oh, birds, winged voices ! children of the light !  
Whose song is love, whose love is melody ;  
Shedding o'er hedge, and field, and bush, and tree,  
Your tuneful joy and musical delight,

Making the air, the earth, the heavens bright ;  
Melodious, tender, sad and gay and free ;  
By all these gifts true poets born are ye ;  
Love circumscribes alone your restless flight.

Poets, I say ? Ah, not like poets here,  
That wander forth alone, companionless ;  
Whose lays are wrung from them by care and pain ;  
Who sing, while blinded by the hot salt tear.

Not such are ye ; but free from all distress,  
Ye, with the sunlight, range o'er land and main.

## VII.

Oh, soft sweet air of early spring,  
Again thou float'st on viewless wing,  
Coax'st snowdrops their white bells to ring,  
And wak'st the blackbird up to sing.



Again, upon the bright'ning lea,  
Beneath the budding bursting tree,  
The toddling baby-mites I see,  
Skip, jump, and frisk in lamb-like glee.

But I am sad, I know not why ;  
My breast heaves with the long-drawn sigh ;  
The tear rounds slowly in mine eye ;  
I'd like to lay me down and die.

### VIII.

The blooming hedge, the budding grove,  
Resound with notes of joy and love ;  
The gleaming bush, the glimm'ring tree,  
Live with a dewy melody.

Along the meadows, flashing bright,  
Run trills of shrill and sweet delight ;  
E'en the small snowy clouds among,  
Gush showers on showers of silver song.

But thou, my heart, oh, tell me why  
Hast thou no language but a sigh ?

## IX

Like a flower-fall of rain,  
Like a snowy elfin train,  
Like stray gleams of moonlight fair,  
Do you shift upon the air,  
Do you flutter on the breeze,  
Do you fall upon the leas,  
Blossoms of the apple-trees ;  
Then on earth's bosom slow ye fade away,  
Like to a low and sweetly dying lay.

## X.

With thousand gaps the earth is split,  
By sunbeams wounded o'er and o'er,  
My heart, it acheth bit by bit ;  
Life's heat and dust have made it sore.

When wilt thou fall from clouds above,  
    In silver showers, refreshing rain ?  
When wilt thou come, reviving love,  
    With dew, and make me whole again ?

A little while, big drops will slake,  
    Oh, earth, thy thirst's hot agony ;  
But till my fevered heart doth break,  
    Will solace ever come to me ?

## THE ORANGE-PEEL IN THE GUTTER.

BEHOLD, unto myself I said,  
This place how dull and desolate,  
For lovely thoughts how all unmeet,  
This drear and darksome London street.  
Above, beneath, and all around,  
Not one slight crumb is to be found ;  
Not one so slight poetic crumb  
For sparrow-poet to feed upon.  
For lo ! above there is no sky !  
No living blue to glad the eye !  
No sun that shines, no flying cloud !  
But fog, that in a huge dun shroud  
Wraps all the London town about ;  
And with it comes the drizzling rain,

And dusky houses wets in vain—  
It ne'er can wash them white again.  
Those houses, yea, how cold and bare,  
With self-same aspect stand they there,  
With grimy windows two and two,  
It makes me sick to look at you !  
No tree, no shrub, to lend you grace,  
With drooping branch to hide your face ;  
No solitary blossom e'en  
To brighten you with flow'ry sheen ;  
Nor living thing I here espy,  
Save yon black cat, with sharp green eye,  
Sliding along with stealthy pace :  
The very spirit of the place.  
And in the road hops here and there  
A sparrow, searching scanty fare,  
The pauper of the sons of air.  
Nought ! nought ! but wall and iron spike,  
Cold, cruel, as if fain 'twould like  
To run some beggar through and through,

And guard the door from him and you:  
And underfoot?—no flowers, no grass,  
T' arrest the step before you pass,  
To send up whispers low and sweet,  
To smile, to beckon, and to greet;  
No gurgling brook, no silent pool,  
In whose pure waters, still and cool,  
The flying bird, the fitting cloud,  
The sunbeam peering in and out,  
The star that slides through limpid air,  
Are glassed in beauty wondrous fair.  
None—none of these, but miry clay,  
To cling tenaciously all day,  
With heavy clutch to your poor heel,  
And in the gutter yon, the peel  
Of some sweet golden orange fruit,  
Though smothered now with dirt and soot  
Still darting forth through dull decay,  
The splendour of a by-gone day,  
The ling'ring of a dying ray.

Oh, wondrous strange ! I feel the deep  
Hush of Italian nights slow creep  
Around me, see the fuller light  
Of southern stars strike through the night,  
And hear the sweeter breathèd sighs  
Of southern breezes swell and rise ;  
Rise, swell I hear the balm-fed breeze,  
Through the dark grove of orange trees,  
Where silver gleams of creamy bloom,  
In fragrance flash along the gloom ;  
And the gold fruit through dark doth shine  
A star ! a mystery divine !  
I hear the sweeter sighs of love,  
By southern hearts breathed through the grove,  
Like to the cooing of a dove ;  
Like to soft falls of summer rain,  
On hoary wood and parched plain ;  
Like to the drops of pale moonlight,  
That sink upon the sea at night ;  
Heart melts with heart, and kiss with kiss,

In holy night, in holy bliss,  
As in the wondrous sunset skies  
Hues melt with hues, and dyes with dyes,  
Till all in one vast glory lies.

But what a full and deep-set roar  
Heaves, swells, and surges more and more,  
Like billows on a stormy shore.  
Yet here flows not the dark blue sea,  
But street on street continually ;  
Here walls on walls press nigh and nigher,  
And roofs on roofs rise high and higher,  
And spire still greets the rising spire.  
The clang, the clash, the row, the roar,  
London, great London, 'tis once more,  
With hurry, flurry, to and fro,  
Time scarce to snarl a "yes" or "no ;"  
Time scarce t' evade your neighbour's toe.  
But here's the market fair to see,  
An island green within that sea



Of streets, a little flow'ry spot,  
Reminding him who's long forgot,  
Of country fields and waving trees,  
Of hedges, birds and flowers and bees.  
The snowdrop stands in moist brown ground,  
And purifies the air around ;  
The violet scatters woodland smells,  
And hyacinths ring their honeyed bells.  
This man sells grapes from sunny Spain ;  
Lombardian almonds this again ;  
Pears, peaches, with the morning down,  
All in that world-wide lap are thrown,  
By all the nations, and they vie  
In fruits, nursed by a southern sky.  
The chaff'ring crowd, the bart'ring maid,  
Here buy and sell, and choose and trade.  
There sits a woman lean and old,  
She shivers in the east wind's cold ;  
She knits ; how fast her fingers fly !  
Her fingers, oh ! how worn and dry.

But still she knits, because she knows  
Her crying grandchild's icy toes.  
Her basket stands close by her side,  
With orange heaps in golden pride ;  
Surely imprisoned sunbeams throw  
Around them such a flush and glow,  
That seeing them we seem to see  
A glimpse of sun-loved Italy.  
Oh, may they all be bought, and give  
The old woman wherewithal to live !

Here in the garret, 'neath the leads,  
Slowly spin out life's weary threads ;  
Slowly and slowly ebbs away  
The breath of one poor child of clay.  
The throbbing pulse, the great'ning eye,  
The parchèd lips, the impatient sigh,  
The mother marks 'twixt hope and fright,  
From weary noon to weary night,  
From midnight round to noon again :

Each hour crammed full with aching pain,  
And anxious flutterings of hope,  
As both alternately find scope.  
And as she breathless notes each sound,  
He whispers, turning round and round,  
“ Oh ! mother, mother, give me drink.”  
She’s up, she’s back scarce in a wink,  
And to her darling’s burning lips,  
The luscious fruit she holds, he sips  
With breaths long drawn, still on and on,  
Till all the cooling juice is gone,  
And only left of fragrant meal,  
Is that still golden orange-peel.

The orange-peel ! ah, where am I ?  
Beneath the deep Italian sky ?  
In Covent Garden’s crowded fair ?  
Or ’neath the roof of pain and care ?  
Ah, still within the darksome street,  
So all unlovely and unsweet !

The welt'ring fog, the drizzling rain,  
The dirt, the dust upon each pane,  
The iron rails so hard and bare,  
The miry clay, they all are here !  
What did befall ? Then did I dream ?  
Was all but air ? Did all but seem ?  
How caught I then this wondrous gleam ?  
Ah ! here yon bit of sunny gold,  
Within the gutter I behold ;  
Across my mind its life it flashed,  
The fragrance of the past it dashed,  
Dying, it kindled life, and hurled  
My soul through heights and depths of world.  
In bud and blossom, fruit and tree,  
Revealed life's perfect harmony !  
Revealed the throbs of mutual love,  
Ensphered by kindling stars above !  
Revealed the stir of busy life,  
The trade, the turmoil, and the strife !  
Struggles of honest poverty ;

A watching mother's agony !  
Child-life that hangs upon a breath,  
The tremblings betwixt life and death—  
Revealed the mystic link, that thrills  
Through joy and pain, through good and ills,  
Wafts influences from afar,  
Connects the worm still with the star,  
And binds the earth, the skies, the main,  
The worlds, with one electric chain !  
Behold, unto myself I said,  
There's nought on earth so desolate,  
But if the eye is there to see  
Will find a joy and mystery,  
As under dark and mossy dells  
The violet hides with spring-like smells !  
No cell, no garret, and no tomb,  
For which no flower of love doth bloom !  
No place so waste, so dark, so drear,  
But heavenly beauty lurketh there !  
And from these two will ever spring,

As music from the harp's sweet string,  
As from the nest the lark soars high,  
As from the flame the live sparks fly,  
The fountain of great poesy,  
Will shine and flash, and flame and glow,  
Like to the million coloured bow  
Of hope and peace, a lovely sign,  
Flinging around that world of thine  
A glory that is all divine !

## QUESTION AND ANSWER.

“ CAN the soul die, believe you ?

Because it seems to me  
My soul is dead and buried,  
So still it seems to be.

“ It quivers not with joy ;

It moaneth not with pain ;  
There is no note in nature  
Awakens it again.

“ Those white clouds in the azure ;

Those lanes ; those breezy trees ;  
Those softly gliding swallows ;  
Those fluted melodies ;

“ Those shadows in the meadows,  
Running a fitful race ;  
With pleasure once they thrilled me,  
But coldly now I gaze.”

Fear not ; oh ! not so lightly  
The soul of mortal dies ;  
It has but wept itself to sleep,  
And all unconscious lies.

The surging feelings overwrought,  
They have but ebbed away,  
And left the soul a little while  
With all their changeful spray.

But stronger, deeper, fuller, in  
The billowy tide will roll,  
And overflow, with life and love,  
The ever living soul.



## THE WANDERER.

ON unknown paths I falter forth,  
A homeless wand'rer in the world ;  
Doubtful I flit across the earth,  
Whither by blowing fates I'm hurled.

I grope about the pathless wood ;  
I tread along the boundless plain ;  
And with the wind's capricious mood,  
I sink and rise upon the main.

The lonely cloud within the sky,  
That by conflicting gales is torn,  
Sways to and fro no more than I,  
Now eastward, and now westward borne.

The crested billow on the deep  
    Knows to which shore its current lies ;  
The blast—the realms which he must sweep ;  
    The ant—the hill to which it hies.

The stork that seeks the tropic glows,  
    It knoweth whither it is bound ;  
And the revolving planet knows  
    The circle of its luminous round.

But I, confusèd, seek a way  
    In darkness here ; I fall, I sigh,  
Upon a broken wing I stray,  
    And all my help lies in a cry !

## ENTANGLED.

I STOOD as one enchanted,  
All in the forest deep :  
As one that wond'ring wanders,  
Dream-bound within his sleep.

A thousand rustling footsteps  
Pattered upon the ground ;  
A thousand whisp'ring voices  
Made the wide silence, sound.

Some murmured deep and deeper,  
Like waves in solemn seas ;  
Some breathèd sweet and sweeter,  
Like elves on moon-lit leas.

Tall ferns, washed down in sunlight,  
    Beckoned with fingers green ;  
Tall flowers nodded strangely,  
    With white and glimm'ring sheen ;

They sighed, they sang so softly,  
    They stretched their arms to me ;  
My heart, it throbbed so wildly,  
    In weird tumultuous glee.

I staggered in the mosses,  
    It seemed to drag me down  
Into the gleaming bushes ;  
    To fall, to sink, to drown.

When lo ! thro' scared foliage,  
    A lovely bird did fly ;  
And looked at me so knowing,  
    With bright and curious eye ;

It broke out into warbles,  
And singing sped away ;  
But I, like one awakened,  
Fled down the mossy way.

## TO HOPE.

Oh come, thou power divine,  
Thou lovely spirit with the wings of light,  
And let thy dewy eyes  
Shed their sweet influences on my soul ;  
Oh let me hear thy voice,  
Whose sound thrills with a keener, deeper bliss,  
Than the shrill jubilation the bird of joy  
Pours on the air !  
Or the child babblings of the gladsome rill  
When, issuing first from out its mossy couch  
In venturesome delight, it frisks in glee  
Adown the hoary mountain, silver-fraught.

Oh come !

Where I do lie drenched in my bitter tears,  
And drowning in dejection : haunted by  
The pale gaunt fears that spectre-like rush forth  
In shadowy swarms from out the brain's black cells,  
Like glaring madmen in confusion 'scaped  
From out their dens, whirling with shambling limbs  
In whooping dances through the startled dusk,  
And pouncing wildly on my shiv'ring soul,  
Where in her hour of weakness prostrate she  
Doth palpitate in terror, like a deer,  
That hunted by the swift pursuing hounds,  
Wounded and bleeding, sinks upon the ground,  
While with hoarse croaks the ravening birds of prey  
Wheel close and closer, darkening all the air.

But thou,—

Come breathe upon me with thy balmy breath,  
Like a young wind, born in the rosèd east,  
That leapeth boy-like from the lap of morn,  
To blow the land all clear from crouching fogs :

Thus drive thou hence the phantoms ; cleanse my soul !  
Thou sweet enchantress, with the magic spells !  
Wails there a heart, lone on the populous earth,—  
Like a weak infant lost within the night  
That crieth piteously in helplessness,  
And pusheth its blind limbs with gestures scared  
Against the gloom,—  
Then with an airy footfall glidest thou  
Gently anigh, as softly as a cloud,  
When one alone in crimson glory slides  
Along the twilight sky : tak'st the bewildered thing  
Into thine arms, thy fair and downy arms,  
And rock'st it on thy bosom—singing low  
An old, old song, old as the flowers that bloom,  
And like them ever young ; till dreams rise up,  
Like cool white mists from out the heart of hills,  
And lie dew-sweet upon it in its sleep !

Sits there an orphan girl with sunken cheeks,  
And red-rimmed eyes, high up beneath the leads,



Stitching with aching fingers all the night  
Beside the meagre flame, to earn her bread,  
And feed with scanty fuel the low fire  
Of life, while the shrill blast  
Dashes the rain against the rattling panes,  
And down the chimney roars with smoke and wet ;—  
Then comest thou, with memories all dim  
And faint, with beauty from the childish years,  
Transposing them into the time to come  
With a new lustre of the full-grown heart.  
Where the bare walls stood with a hungry stare,  
The golden cornfields, weighed down by their wealth,  
Sway to and fro ; purling the brook flows on ;  
And, like a bit of sky drawn down by love,  
Wilds of forget-me-nots run riot round ;  
And meadows scent the air ; and lowing kine  
Are driven home ; and silver geese hiss loud  
Within the pools ; and childhood's silver laughs  
Ring o'er the green like chimes of silver bells  
In the clear atmosphere ; and through green boughs

Curls up the smoke from many a thatched roof,  
Flushed all the land with roseate floods of eve,  
While large and full glows low the harvest moon,  
There as through homely fields she lightly walks,  
And one is by her side, and whispers low,  
And thine, oh hope! the future's kindling glow.

Rocks there a sailor on a reeling ship,  
That staggers blindly like a brain-struck man,  
Around the staring cliffs!  
While the wild blast, the fiddler of the deep,  
Wakes such mad music on his shrieking strings  
That the fierce elements in huge delight  
Vault from their torpor, rearing giant heights!  
Ha! The maned billows from abysmal deeps  
Leap like live Alps, and catch the tearing clouds  
That dizzy haste along the wilds of sky;  
Tossing them round in labyrinthic whirls  
To the witch light of lightning, and the roar  
Of thunder, in its crashing clattering fall.

Yea, while the ocean yawneeth for its prey,  
Yelling with starvèd jaws around the hull,  
Man's sole frail guardian from the fangs of death,—

Thou softly float'st,

Like to the dove that bore the olive branch  
Across the waste of waters, to his side. . . .  
No longer sees he then the wide wild sea,  
No longer hears he the tempestuous blast :  
But where the cottage leans against the cliff,  
The evening star shedding its peace adown,  
He lifts the latch, and with one bound of joy  
He stands in the low room, beside the hearth,  
Where sits his winsome wife, and rocks her babe  
With lullabies ; and heaving one big sob  
He strains her to his breast, her whom he thought  
On this side of the grave to see no more !  
Then does she take him by the hand, and leads  
Him round from cot to cot, where with round cheeks  
His children lie, sleep-flushed, 'twixt snow-white  
sheets ;

And snatching up the youngest in his arms,  
With an untameable emotion, weeps  
His kisses on him, till it opens wide  
Large dream-dew'd eyes, and lips with cherry mouth,  
“ Oh, Dada, Dada ! ”——*That* thou dost for him !

Wanders the patriot on a stranger shore,  
An exile from the land he loved too well :  
Within his heart  
The festering wound a thankless nation strikes,  
When cloud-capp'd by its ignorance and fear,  
And goaded on by spurring king and priest,  
Like a mad dog it turns and bites the hand  
Stretched out to heal.

He sees his friends fall off like rotten leaves  
That scrambling flee the tempest-girted oak ;  
He sees the enemies he boldly braved,  
Forging the red-hot slanders wherewithal  
To scorch his writhing soul !

Alone in the wide world, alone he stands ;  
Alone, save where beyond the roaring seas  
His mother weeps, and weeps, oh God! through him.  
Then, blowing from dead deserts the simoom  
Of doubt breathes on him, with its killing breath,  
With'ring the flowers of faith, the groves of youth,  
And buffeting his heart on cruel waves  
Of wind, e'en like a quiv'ring autumn leaf.

Oh, is it strange ?

That in the midnight, on the dark there grow  
Pale faces sweating blood, and wrapped in shrouds,  
Turning reproachful eyes upon his eyes,  
And asking dumbly, " Wherefore did we die,  
And spill the wine-filled goblets of our youth  
On barren soil that will not teem with birth ?"  
That brides, like broken lilies whirled along  
By arrowy streams, glide past and sadly sob,  
" Thou'st mowed us down, and mowed us down in  
vain !"

That infants thrill the silence with their wail,

“ Why are we fatherless, if fatherland  
Is still denied ?” And that his heartstrings quake  
With sobs of mothers’ hearts that hopeless break ?  
Strange that his purpose, that did seem so fair,  
With a white blaze of light around her head,  
Which fell like orient beams on nations’ brows,  
Should wane before his terror-stricken eyes ?  
And that in direst agony of soul  
His noble nature tott’ring on her base,  
Should question if his deeds were rightful deeds ?  
Stirred up by God’s own living breath, or pushed  
By hot ambition’s ravenous desire ?  
And if the aim that drew were but a dream  
By which his visionary youth was mocked,  
As travellers in the desert by the shine  
Of fair false waters ?—At that torturing thought  
Smells of cold graves struck damp upon his brow,  
Till his wild eyes grew void, and limp his limbs,  
And he had dropped resistless in the jaws  
Of madness or of death !

Hadst thou not come, perennial presence ! bright  
As Phosphorus in the dim morning skies !  
And poured thy morning sunbeams on his heart,  
And blown thy morning breezes on his soul,  
Till freshly born the world, and on him smiled  
With eyes as tender as his mother's were,  
When sowing love upon his cradled self.  
Then back plucked he his purpose, fixed it firm  
In iron steadfastness upon his soul,  
And called on faith, where with upturnèd eyes  
Above the clouds she treads the mountain peaks,  
And on that love, which boundless as the sky,  
Stretches o'er all mankind its azured vault.  
Then rose he, set his trustful eyes on high,  
And set his heart among the lowly born :  
For in the vasty glimmerings of the dawn  
He saw such visions of the things to be,  
Such heights of being ascended, and such love  
And justice throning on the seats of men,  
That with unflagging steps he calmly trod

The walks of martyrdom ! Oh, crown his brows  
With buds of those full summers of the race !

Mourns there an aged mother, lying low  
Upon the lowly grave,  
Round which the autumn moans her mournful dirge,  
And shivering cadence of the shrunken leaves  
Keeps saddest measure with the wailing wind ;  
While the pale glimm'rings of the waning moon  
Fall in cold tears upon the unknown tomb,  
Beneath whose sod, washed by the ghastly mists,  
Lies he, her one sole flower, that on the breast  
Of life bloomed for her all the days and nights ;  
In the midsummer of his lusty life  
Devoured by that grim beast, whose reeking breath  
Is saturated with the blood of man—  
The twin of pestilence—the foul firstborn  
Of her who spinneth in the nether gloom  
The phantasms that turn mad the brains of men,



And him whose savage lusts and greedy soul  
Would make his footstool on the necks of men !  
Oh here, even here like a stray beam of light  
That glides unscared in sacred tenderness  
Across the heavy vapours, brooding blind  
In shapeless masses o'er a joyless tarn  
Deep sunk in mountains,—even here the gleam  
Of thy gold hair makes music in the dark,  
Cradlest the head of grief on thy warm breast,  
Whisperest in tones sweeter than honeycomb  
Of that new heaven where death shall be no more,  
Nor grief, nor crying, neither shall there be  
More pain ; for former things have passed away.  
And with thy wings of light around her soul,  
And with thy dewy eyes upon her heart,  
Death takes her gently like a cherubim  
By the shrunk hand, and leads her to her rest.

\* \* \* \* \*

Oh Hope ! thou consolation of the soul !  
Flash forth, and like a sun strike on the clouds  
Of dull despondency, that pour their rain  
In showers upon the sad heart's shivering soil ;  
Flash forth, and force each drop e'en as it falls  
To glass thy loveliness, and on the cloud  
Frowning in dumb defiance, paint such bloom  
Ethereal, that its blackness but becomes  
A foil on which thy brightness brighter beams,  
Till spanned with rainbow-glory the sad soul  
Glistens in glimmering smiles through all her tears,  
And life shone through by white eternity,  
Circled with calm as by a covenant,  
Is born in beauty of the bitter tears,  
Like Aphrodite from the salt sea waves.

## INVOCATION.

JUNE, 1866.

BREATHE thro' me in music,  
Spirit of the time !  
Pregnant with the future,  
Spirit of the time !

As the west wind sougheth,  
Through the swaying pine,  
Sweep thro' all my branches  
With thy song divine.

Nations now are rolling  
Onward, as the sea  
Which the moon upheaveth,  
Thus upheaved by thee.

Muffled mutt'ring groweth  
Louder on the air!  
Like a lion roaring,  
Rising from his lair.

As the anthem surgeth  
Through cathedral aisles,  
Swells the voice of nations  
Over miles of miles.

As the thunder growleth  
In yon cloud afar,  
In their bosoms broodeth  
The black bolt of war.

Snap in twain your fetters,  
Cleave your ancient yoke,  
Burst the gloom of ages  
With the lightning's stroke.

Clap on clap, down-crashing,  
Clatter crowd on crowd,  
From Venetia's dungeons,  
From the Roman shroud ;

From the graves of Poland,  
From Germania's plains,  
From the death-pollution  
Of imperial chains.

Feel yourselves as brothers,  
Dare to think ye free ;  
And in dust will shiver  
Thrones of tyranny.

Like night's phantoms, with'ring  
'Neath the glance of dawn,  
Kings and priests dissolveth  
Your full-flashing frown.

Forward, sons of morning,  
    With a sacred ire !  
Lead ye, like Jehovah,  
    In a pillar of fire.

Through the dreary desert,  
    Through the burning sand  
Till, on shores of promise  
    And of peace, ye land.

Where a purer people,  
    Led by laws innate,  
Shall, towards the heavens,  
    Tower in grander state.

Breathe and blow in music ;  
    On, from clime to clime ;  
Baptize, with the Holy Ghost  
    Spirit of the time.

## ODE TO A CHILD.

BRIGHT as a morn of spring,  
 That jubilates along the earth,  
 With clouds, and winds, and flowers rejoicing,  
 And all the creatures that on wing  
 Scarce dip the ground in their ethereal mirth.  
 Whilst the dew'd sunlight and the gold-flushed rain  
 Wed midway in the air ;  
 And from the twain  
 Is ever born that fairy gossamer,  
 The iridescent bridge that spans the skies.  
 Yea, e'en in such wild glory dost thou glow  
 Soul-fresh exuberant child !  
 And drops of heavenly freshness gleam  
 On red, red lips, in dark-orbed eyes,  
 Like morning dews that glimmering show

On winter moss and heath'ry wild,  
And soft-cropped grasses undefiled,  
In all the shifting splendour of a dream.

Oh, thou, that in thy glee  
Know'st of no ending yet, and no beginning,  
Making the hours melodious with thy play,  
Like grasshoppers, that through the livelong day  
Hopping on the new-mown hay,  
Sun-struck trill their roundelay ;  
Or the cricket, chirping cheerly  
Late at night, at morning early,  
With a little baby-singing  
Like an echo faintly ringing  
From the distant summer leas ;  
And with tremulous murmurs clinging  
Round the hearth, like clustering bees  
Humming round the linden trees.

And yet athwart thy soul,



At times, perchance, I seem to see  
The hid existence of far off events,  
Trailing their slumb'rous shadows silently.  
For in the dusky deeps  
Of thy large eyes  
Sometime the veiled outline of a still  
And mute-born vision sleeps  
As in the hollows of a hill,  
With dim and darksome rents  
The dreamful shadow of the morning lies,  
And softly, slowly, ever down doth roll,  
Till lost in mystic deeps it flees our watchful eyes.

Yet from that silent trance  
Quick leap'st thou back into thy playfulness,  
As waters darkened by the drifting cloud  
Into the swift sweet sunlight crowd,  
Where dashed with dewy gold they dance  
In unbedimmèd sprightliness ;  
Till with their blithesome strain

They make the brooding mountains loud  
And fling their merriment across the voiceless plain.  
And buzzing lightly, here and there,  
Thou, like a little curious fly  
That fusses through the air,  
Dost pry and spy  
With thy keen inquisitive eye ;  
Poking fatly-dimpled fingers  
Into corner, box, and closet,  
Where, perchance, there hidden lingers  
Some deposit,  
To be carried off triumphantly.  
And with many questions, ever  
Rippling like a restless river,  
Puzzling many an older brain,  
Dost thou hour by hour increase thy store  
Of marvellous lore.  
Thus a squirrel darting deftly  
Up and down autumnal trees,  
Sees its hoard of chesnuts growing swiftly

In a heap upon the leaf-strewn leas.

Yea, open art thou to each influence  
That strikes on thy soft spirit from without  
Thy spirit not yet frozen, nor shut out  
From nature's kindling breath  
By selfish aims, nor dulled the sense  
By hot desires ; alas, too oft the death  
Of man's spiritual vision. No, thy soul  
Is yet all clear and bright  
And lieth naked 'neath the eye of heaven  
As a small mountain pool—  
A pure and azure pool,  
To whom its food is given  
By dews, and rains, and snows all lily-white,  
That softly fall  
Through many a summer's day and winter's night ;  
And whose unspotted breast  
Glasses each pageant of the outer world,  
The cloud with pinions to the blast unfurled,

The mountains' haughty crest,  
 The slanting beam of twilight skies  
 That like a golden ladder lies  
 Stretching across perchance for angel hosts

To slide

Down to the earth with heavenly boon ;  
 And glasses too the hurrying mists that glide  
 Like gliding ghosts,  
 And stars, and all the mildness of the moon.

As yet 'tis early January with thee !

Warm-cradled doth the summer leaf

Lie folded in the winter leaf

On the blank tree.

And folded in the earth the seed

The future mother of some glorious weed,

Or flower blowing gorgeously,

Or cedar branching wondrously,

Lies slumbering ; its whole destiny

Of great or lowly, foul or fair,

In this minutest space surely foreshadowed there.  
But let the west wind, ocean-born,  
Floating towards the meads of morn,  
But once spread out his wild and vasty wing  
Setting the sap a-cantring ; till new life  
Works wonders : then thy being  
Will strangely stir, as at the sound  
Of sounding drum and fife  
The war-horse paws the ground.  
And through thy sweet pure veins  
Life like a waterfall will grandly bound.

But now the Psyche of thy being  
Still shyly doth essay her delicate wing,  
Like to that airy nurseling of the sun  
When first it breaketh through its dun  
And hornèd shell, and tries  
To move its pinions, powdered o'er and o'er  
With rainbow dust of April skies,  
That have as not yet learnt to soar,

And lie soft-folded in sweet mysteries.

Oh ! looking on thee, I do speculate

On thy futurity !

What wilt thou be ?

Some great and glorious lot I dream for thee,

Some starry fate !

For in thy nature meet

Such buoyant strength, and such a sweet

Half-veiled heart tenderness, that on thy being doth rest

Like soft dark bloom upon a pansy's breast ;

And pity gushes o'er thee, like warm rain,

For everything in pain,

Or great or small ; and such a shoal

Of thick-bred fancies ever swimmeth forth

From the deep sea

Of changeful fantasy,

Like golden fish that glitter in the sun ;

And quick perception leading on and on,

Into a maze of thought, fresh'ning the soul

Of him who listens. Aye, what wilt thou be ?  
Perchance, one of that sacred band  
That ever were the salt of earth,  
Whom men call dowered with genius ! They who stand  
In grandeur and in glory like the Alps,  
With silver-shining scalps,  
Bathed in the ether ; feeding all the land  
With the pure skyey waters that descend  
For ever from them ; men who freed  
From narrow bonds of hate and greed,  
Fetters of custom, and blind circumstance,  
Breathe the soul-quickenning air of thought and  
love.

And struggling into freedom, sudden see  
The solid shroud of sense  
Consumèd by a heavenly flame,  
As is the vapour dense and dun,  
Which the earth-spirit fast doth breed  
By the great sun.  
And the large mind in native majesty

Doth catch that radiance evermore above,  
Around us; finest effluence of being ;  
Illuminating with sharp sudden blaze  
Nature's mysterious ways ;  
Until his spirit, feeling itself one  
With all that is, and was, and is to be,  
Vibrates into intenser life,  
Which is creation !  
Then makes he revelation  
Of that one truth, that as a supreme ray  
With new existence heavily fraught,  
Lightened in awful loveliness  
And empyrean holiness,  
Upon his passive thought ;  
Till with long peals of explosive oracular thunder,  
He bursts and cleaves and splinters asunder  
The clinging clinking manacles of life,  
That fall and curl in harsh black masses under  
His wingèd feet : and through time's noisy strife  
His infinite acts do strike like flame



Of a volcano seen across a sea,  
On nights when with earthquake the labouring hills  
    are rife ;  
And labouring, too, like heaving heights, doth he,  
Girt round with turbulent whirls of praise and blame,  
Breathe the hot spark of that which he did see,  
As vital force that pulses strong and warm  
In the mid-heart of creeds,  
Or rolls itself along the epic's flood,  
Or lives through ages in the marbled form,  
Or leaps to life in the heroic deeds,  
Watering with the heart's noble blood  
The seed of future world-reforming good.

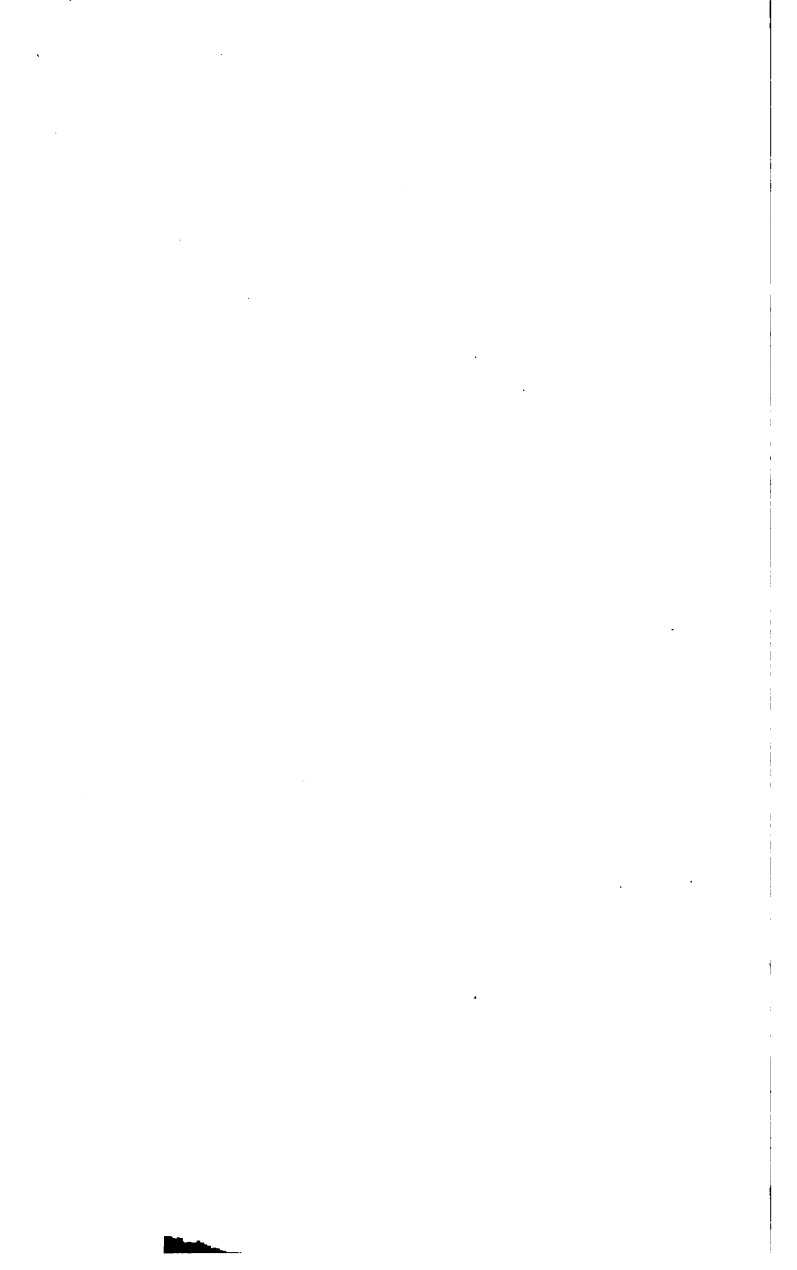
    But stay, my soul ;  
Too far thou fliest, as a falcon flies,  
Forgetful of the hand  
Where he must perch, so tracèd with the grand  
And boundless skies.  
Oh come my song, and roll

Thy billows back, where on the swelling bank,  
Mid flowers, and reeds, and grasses rank,  
And feathered warblers, warbling wild,  
Sporteth the unconscious child,  
Safely roofed o'er by shielding mother's love,  
Like wee lamb-clouds of morn by tender skies above.  
Hark ! now I hear thy low soft laughter falling  
Upon my heart, like to the murmurous calling  
Of brooding stock doves, now it sweet doth sound  
Like rippling rills of rain, that make the ground  
Harmonious on hot summer afternoons ;  
And now thy joyous croons  
Blither and brighter tumble on my ear  
All clarion clear,  
Like songs of matin birds that in spring weather,  
Hid in young woods, do jubilate together.  
Yea, on the musing mind,  
That wrapt in meditation's sober dress,  
Looks inward in a half-forgetfulness  
Of the world's outer show,

Thou breakest in, like a tumultuous wind  
That teasing tosses  
The foam of flickering fountain ;  
Or like the flashing flow  
Of waves of light along the long green grasses ;  
Or waters bickering low  
Down many a sloping mountain  
That make themselves a nest mid ferns and shining  
          mosses.

Of each free thing that in its joy  
All chains, and bonds, and obstacles o'erpasses  
In elemental gladsofnesses  
And wonderful wild wantonnesses—  
Fire, water, wand'ring air,  
Hast a part, exuberant boy,  
Glorious, glad, and fresh, and fair,  
And blowing in upon the tired brain  
Nature's undying, spirit-stirring strain.

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